



Community of the Legion of Mary as an Oasis in the Urban Parish

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Abstract: This research focuses on the role of the Legion of Mary community as an urban parish oasis, the locus taken is the Legion of Mary in Tidar Parish, Malang. Urban parishioners often experience dryness and thirst for spiritual refreshment, in the midst of urban hustle and bustle, the Legion of Mary Community is present to become a place to explore the spirituality of the people. The Legion of Mary community in Tidar-Malang Parish is a refreshing oasis in an urban context that is often full of hustle and bustle. In the busy parish atmosphere, the Legion of Mary offers serenity and togetherness. Various spiritual activities such as joint prayer, retreats, and social services for those in need. This community is not only a place to share faith, but also encourages solidarity among its members and strengthens social ties within the parish. In the research, the author used quantitative methodology by distributing questionnaires to parishioners who are active in the Legion of Mary community. The results of the discussion found that the Legion of Mary community in urban parishes greatly helped the faith growth of the people who were full of busyness and hustle and bustle of the city.

INTRODUCTION

Modern urban life, filled with hustle and bustle, often leaves individuals feeling spiritually marginalized. Amidst the noise of urban life, people often feel lost in direction and meaning in their spirituality (Aziz, 2018). In this context, the "Legion of Mary" refers to a Catholic lay association that focuses on the spiritual development of its members through devotion to the Virgin Mary and various activities aimed at fostering faith and service within the community. The Legion of Mary, a Catholic organization founded in the early 20th century, has proven itself as an oasis for urban dwellers seeking peace, spiritual guidance, and virtue development. For some members feeling isolated in the busy urban life, the Legion of Mary provides an opportunity to interact with others and build positive social networks (Kustenbauder, 2009). It is a way to overcome feelings of loneliness and isolation that often arise in the midst of bustling large cities.

The Legion of Mary is not just an ordinary Catholic organization but also a spiritual oasis for urban dwellers. Its existence provides significant benefits in fostering faith, practicing moral virtues, character development, and social and emotional support for its members. The organization helps its members find deeper meaning in their lives amidst the chaos of modern life (Nadya & Herlambang, 2020).

One of the main benefits of the existence of the Legion of Mary is its ability to strengthen the faith of its members. Members of the Legion of Mary engage in various activities that encourage them to delve into the teachings and values of the Catholic faith. Through prayer, meditation, and group discussions, they have the opportunity to reflect on and deepen their beliefs. The presence of fellow believers in The Legion of Mary also provides much-needed social and spiritual support on their faith journey (Arnoldus Yansen, 2020). This is very helpful for each member to develop deeper communication with God and feel His presence in their daily lives. As a result, they become more steadfast in their faith and feel closer to God.

According to Frank Duff, the primary goal of the Legion of Mary is to help its members in spiritual growth, deepen their love for Mary, and serve the Church and society through various religious and social activities (Moreau S. and Kombo J., 1991). By achieving these goals, this research is expected to provide a better understanding of the role of the Legion of Mary community in the urban parish's life and how its contribution can enhance the spiritual and social quality of life for parish members and the surrounding community.

In this writing, the researcher will explain how the existence of The Legion of Mary provides significant benefits in the personal lives of its members, helping them strengthen their faith and practice moral virtues in everyday life.

Departing from the above issues, several questions arise: How does the Legion of Mary integrate spiritual values into the daily lives of its members? What is the main motivation for the Legion of Mary members living in urban environments to join this organization? In the context of the busyness and challenges of urban life, how does The Legion of Mary facilitate spiritual development and fellowship among its members? And how does the Legion of Mary contribute to promoting moral values in the midst of urban society? These questions will help investigate various aspects of the complex relationship between transformative leadership, the existence of the Legion of Mary community, and its influence on spiritual experience, community growth, and cultural change in the context of a busy urban parish. The author will answer these questionnaire statuses with Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development. To avoid extensive discussions from the core issue, the author focuses only on the moral development of the Legion of Mary members in the Parish of Santo Andreas Tidar.

This research aims to delve into how this community can be an "Oasis" or a source of fresh spiritual life in the busy urban life often full of pressures. This includes understanding worship practices, social activities, and support that they offer to members. It also provides broader insights into the role of religious communities in modern urban settings, highlighting how they can be a source of peace and inspiration in busy daily life.

The spirituality of service applied by the Legion of Mary can be a foundation for Catholic families in overcoming various challenges and trials (Yansen, 2020). He highlights principles such as love, dedication, and prayer as the main elements in building a spiritually strong family. He emphasizes that the family is the core of Catholic faith and the first place where religious and moral values are taught and applied in everyday life.

Lawrence Kohlberg (Wahidah & Maemonah, 2020), in the theory of moral development, outlines three levels of moral development, each with two stages, forming six stages of moral development. The first level, Preconventional, involves morality based on punishment and reward. At this level, individuals focus on obedience and avoiding punishment. The second level, Conventional, reflects an understanding of social rules and social norms. At this stage, individuals prioritize conformity and interpersonal relationships. Finally, the Third level, Postconventional, involves morality based on more abstract and universal ethical principles. Kohlberg describes how individuals who reach this stage can act according to higher moral principles, even if it contradicts the law or social norms.

Wekin (2020), expresses how this religious organization strives to pursue its mission in the dynamics of an increasingly complex urban environment. Wekin highlights the challenges and opportunities faced by the Legion of Mary Argo Karmel in spreading its religious teachings in a heterogeneous urban environment.

The Legion of Mary, as an oasis in the urban parish, can serve as a catalyst for individuals to reach higher stages of moral development, where they not only consider personal interests but also pay attention to the needs and values of the larger community. They may feel a moral calling to serve others, contribute to the common good, and nurture spiritual life amidst the bustling urban environment. In this regard, Kohlberg's thoughts on moral development can help us understand how communities like the Legion of Mary can act as drivers for the moral and spiritual growth of individuals in urban parishes, creating a haven of goodness and dedication in an environment that is often challenging and tumultuous.

METHOD

This research employs a quantitative descriptive approach and utilizes a descriptive analysis method. The quantitative approach is chosen because it involves statistical methods in determining average values. Meanwhile, the descriptive analysis method is used by distributing questionnaires to gather information from respondents. The quantitative descriptive approach is a research method that emphasizes the collection and analysis of numerical data to objectively and systematically describe phenomena or variables (Riyanto & Hatmawan, 2020).

The study is conducted among members of the Legion of Mary community, specifically the Queen of Peace Presidium in the St. Andreas Tidar Parish in Malang. Respondents involved in this study are those actively participating in the Legion of Mary community activities, with a total of 26 respondents. The research is carried out in September 2023.

In this research, data is collected through a survey technique by distributing questionnaires to active members of the Legion of Mary Community in the Tidar-Malang Parish. The questionnaire used is a closed-ended questionnaire, and it focuses on the role of the Legion of Mary community in fostering spiritual growth, especially in the moral development of its members. The response options consist of five choices: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree.

The analysis technique in this research involves grouping the average score of responses on the questionnaire based on the Likert scale categories.

$$\text{Score} = \frac{\text{Obtained Score}}{\text{Highest Score}} \times 100\%$$

Table 1. The interval score categories

Score Interval	Categories
83 – 100	Very High
65 – 82	High
47 – 64	Average
29 – 46	Low
10 – 28	Very Low

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The questionnaire used in this study has been validated and its reliability has been tested. The validation results for the 10 items on the questionnaire can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Validation results of the questionnaire

No. Item	r _{hitung}	r _{tabel}	Keterangan
1	0,63	0,17	Valid
2	0,67	0,18	Valid
3	0,53	0,19	Valid
4	0,42	0,20	Valid
5	0,45	0,21	Valid
6	0,51	0,22	Valid
7	0,56	0,23	Valid
8	0,6	0,17	Valid
9	0,62	0,17	Valid
10	0,51	0,17	Valid

Based on the Table 2, it is found that the calculated correlation (r) is greater than the table correlation (r table). This indicates that all items are valid. The reliability level of the 10 items, measured using Cronbach's Alpha on the questionnaire, is 0.73, which means it has very high reliability.

The results of data processing, including the highest score, lowest score, average score, and standard deviation of responses from the Legion of Mary members at St. Andrew's Parish in Tidar, Malang, can be presented in the following Table 3.

Table 3. The data processing results on the responses of The Legion of Mary community members at St. Andrew's Parish in Tidar, Malang.

Respondents	26 persons
The highest score	92
The lowest score	48
Average	70,26
Standard Deviation	8,22

Based on the Table 3, it's evident that there are a total of 26 respondents. The highest score obtained is 92, and the lowest score is 48. The average score for the questionnaire is 70.26, with a standard deviation of 8.22.

Now, let's look at the percentage data for the responses to each item regarding the moral development of each member of the Legion of Mary at St. Andrew's Parish, Tidar. This information is presented in the table 4.

Table 4. The percentage data of the questionnaire responses

No. Item	kategori				
	SS	S	KS	TS	STS
1	16,23	24,45	11,98	1,32	0
2	12,12	34,31	8,53	0	0
3	33,21	43,11	9,45	0,01	0
4	23,34	34,44	1	0	0
5	15,15	41,44	1,12	0	0
6	17,47	34,77	1	0	0
7	31,45	35,75	1	0	0
8	11,24	56,46	0	1	0
9	14,52	45,34	1,21	0	0
10	10,32	65,45	0	0	0
rata-rata keseluruhan	156,7	370,18	35,29	2,33	0

In the table 4, we found that respondents' responses to statement 1 about the role of the Legion of Mary in integrating spiritual values into daily life are as follows: 16.23% strongly agree, 24.45% agree, 11.98% disagree, and 1.32% strongly disagree. No respondents stated that they strongly disagree.

For statement 2, regarding whether the spiritual activities of the Legion of Mary affect morality in daily life, it was found that 12.12% strongly agree, 34.31% agree, 8.53% disagree, and there were no respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Statement 3, about changes in individual moral life after joining the Legion of Mary, showed that 33.21% strongly agree, 34.31% agree, and 8.53% disagree. No respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

In statement 4, asking whether joining the Legion of Mary makes parents feel closer to God or more peaceful and happily, 23.34% strongly agree, 34.44% agree, 1% disagree, and there were no respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

For statement 5, about the positive impact of integrating spiritual values of the Legion of Mary on social relationships in the urban community, 15.15% strongly agree, 41.44% agree, 1.12% disagree, and there were no respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Statement 6, regarding the community's support in facing life issues for its members, showed that 17.47% strongly agree, 34.77% agree, 1% disagree, and there were no respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

In statement 7, about the social support received from the community, 31.45% strongly agree, 35.75% agree, 1% disagree, and there were no respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

For statement 8, about scheduling work with community meetings, 11.24% strongly agree, 56.46% agree, 1% disagree, and there were no respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Statement 9, about the motivation of the community leader and members in serving, showed that 14.52% strongly agree, 45.34% agree, 1.21% disagree, and there were no respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Finally, statement 10, about challenges during membership in The Legion of Mary, indicated that 10.32% strongly agree, 65.45% agree, and there were no respondents who disagreed, strongly disagreed, or somewhat disagreed.

Discussion

Lawrence Kohlberg successfully developed six stages in the overall process of moral reasoning development in children and young people. These six ideal types were derived by transforming three Piaget stages and turning them into three "levels," each further divided into two "stages." The three "levels" are pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional.

In the pre-conventional stage, individuals often behave "good" and respond to cultural labels of right and wrong. However, they interpret these labels solely in physical terms (punishment, rewards, goodness) or in terms of the physical power that enforces rules and labels things as good or bad. This level consists of two stages:

1. Stage I - Punishment and Obedience Orientation: Focus on punishment and unquestioning respect for higher authority. The physical consequences of actions, regardless of their human meaning or value, determine the goodness or badness of the actions.

2. Stage II - Relativist-Instrumental Orientation: Right actions are those that instrumentally satisfy individual needs and sometimes the needs of others. Human relationships are viewed as transactional, involving elements of fairness, reciprocity, and equal sharing, but all are interpreted in pragmatic, physical terms, and not in terms of loyalty, gratitude, or justice.

In the conventional level, there is an adjustment to societal norms, but also a commitment to maintaining, supporting, and justifying these social norms.

In the post-conventional level, characterized by a primary drive toward autonomous, independent moral principles with validity and applicability, irrespective of the authority of groups or individuals holding them, and regardless of individuals' identification with those individuals or groups. At this level, there is a clear effort to formulate moral values and principles that have validity and can be applied independently of group authority or individuals adhering to those principles.

In this research, an investigation was conducted on the response of the Legion of Mary members to the role of the Legion of Mary community in contributing to the growth of faith and morality among the faithful. The research was carried out by distributing questionnaire surveys. The results of this study indicate that the overall average score on the questionnaire is 15.67, indicating a strong agreement. This suggests that the response of the Legion of Mary members to the role of the Legion of Mary community in fostering the faith and morality of the faithful is very high. This indicates that members of the Legion of Mary community have reached the conventional moral stage, where they can move towards autonomous, independent moral principles that have validity and application, regardless of the authority of groups or individuals holding them and regardless of individual identification with those individuals or groups (Setyawan, 2017).

Engaging in dialogue with God through devotion to Saint Mary makes Legionaries and Christian families reliable individuals capable of bringing light wherever they are. Devotion is a strength or weapon to destroy the evils in the world, especially within Christian families. Through devotion, the relationship between the faithful and Saint Mary is clearly evident, and various ways are employed in devotion to Mother Mary, making it one of the most important devotions as an attitude and expression of Christian faith, even giving a distinctive character to Catholic Church spirituality (Ardijanto & Putra, 2015). The implication of devotion is a ministry for the faithful. The spirit of service in the Legion of Mary aims for the glory of God and fellow human beings. To achieve this, it is not success that is desired, but rather a faithful commitment to God. Families become more cohesive in the spirit of The Legion of Mary's service and become true Legionaries, bearers of good news for the salvation of the world (Musi et al., 2021).

Persistence in worship, discipline, and commitment to moral values are characteristic traits of The Legion of Mary in integrating spirituality into daily life. Thus, they are not just adherents of religious teachings but also implement them in every aspect of life, creating harmony between the spiritual dimension and the real world.

The role of the Legion of Mary in shaping the spiritual life of its members is highly significant in the lives of the Legionaries. This is evident from the values they uphold. They form a close-knit community, promoting values of togetherness, love, and solidarity among their members. They also engage in social services by providing assistance to those in need and participating in charitable activities. The shaping of spiritual life is reflected in their efforts to strengthen faith and spiritual connections among members. Musi emphasizes the importance of prayer spaces and prayer communities in urban parishes in developing spiritual values for the faithful (Musi et al., 2021).

Categorical activities in a parish greatly assist the faithful in experiencing their faith, especially in urban areas. Furthermore, these categorical activities also help the parish fulfill its mission of leading the faithful in the experience of faith in daily life (Marliani et al., 2022). Categorical activities in a parish play a crucial role in strengthening and developing the faith of the faithful, particularly for those residing in urban environments. The parish, as the center of spiritual activities, has the responsibility to guide the faithful in experiencing their faith in daily life.

In the urban context, where people are busy with their own affairs, categorical activities provide space for reflection, prayer, and sharing experiences (Wekin, 2020). Through active participation in these activities, the faithful can find inner peace and receive moral support in facing the challenges of modern life. Moreover, categorical activities also serve as an effective means for the parish to achieve its mission, bringing the faithful closer to God and encouraging them to apply faith values in every aspect of life. Thus, categorical activities not only enrich the spirituality of the faithful but also strengthen the bonds among them and extend the positive impact of the parish in embodying Christ's love in daily life (Aziz, 2018).

Iwamony emphasizes that the laity forms the foundation of congregational life, building a strong foundation for unity and participation in worship. In every step they take, the laity creates close bonds of unity, reinforcing the religious values highly regarded by the community. With their belief and dedication, the laity becomes not only recipients of teachings but also active contributors in shaping the spiritual character of the congregation. Through their role in categorical activities, such as social and other positive activities, they not only nurture spiritual needs but also have a positive impact on the surrounding environment. Thus, the church members are not just congregation members but partners in building a strong foundation for a sustainable spiritual community (Iwamony, 2019).

Through active participation in social activities, they create strong bonds within the community, strengthening solidarity and cooperation. Thus, church members not only become recipients of good spiritual practices but also active contributors to building goodness around them. This not only enriches their own spiritual experience but also helps create a better overall environment. Thus, their role goes beyond the existence within the church, extending into joint efforts to strengthen and advance the quality of community life.

The Legion of Mary has become a place for individuals to develop moral values, spirituality, and camaraderie (Setiana, 2021). With a strong foundation of Catholic beliefs, this community has successfully created an environment where its members can grow and develop morally.

One aspect that distinguishes the Legion of Mary as a moral development space is its focus on service and solidarity. Members of the Legion of Mary actively engage in social and charitable activities aimed at assisting those in need. This service encompasses not only material aspects but also extends deep into providing moral and spiritual support to others (Moreau & Kombo, 1991). The community provides an environment where its members can deepen their relationship with God and establishes a solid moral foundation for individuals, helping them understand the ethical and spiritual values upheld by the Legion of Mary.

Lawrence Kohlberg, in his theory of conventional moral development, states that humans have made a genuine effort to formulate moral values and principles that have universal validity and can be applied regardless of the authority of a particular group or individual holding these principles. This reflects an evolution in human thinking, leading to the pursuit of justice, truth, and ethics beyond the boundaries of a particular group or individual (Precht & Zirfas, 2020). Throughout history, humans have sought universal moral foundations. Although societies and cultures vary, there is a genuine effort to find values acceptable to everyone, regardless of background or the interests of specific groups. At this stage, moral concepts such as justice, equality, and human dignity are considered universal moral foundations. Moral principles detached from the authority of a specific group or individual are reflected in human efforts to develop independent moral norms. This involves deep reflection on the nature of humanity and human rights (Setyawan, 2017). For example, the right to life, freedom, and justice is considered moral values inherent to humanity, independent of any specific culture or religion.

The Legion of Mary community, as a human-run entity, has become a significant place in the effort to develop independent moral norms. With a strong foundation of beliefs and values held by its members, the Legion of Mary is not just a congregation but also a space for building an independent and strong moral foundation. In practice, the Legion of Mary community always emphasizes moral values derived from religious teachings and traditions. Their existence goes beyond religious rituals, involving active participation in understanding and internalizing high moral teachings. The moral norms advocated by the Legion of Mary are not merely the result of external influence but reflect the understanding and personal commitment of its members to the ethical principles they uphold (Siga, 2023).

The Legion of Mary provides a space for its members to think and act independently according to their moral beliefs. In this supportive atmosphere, they can develop moral norms that align with the values they hold without being influenced by external pressures that may contradict their principles (Nenobesi, 2020). This makes the community a safe space for the development of independent and authentic moral growth.

The Legion of Mary community is not just a religious activity center but also a place where humans strive to develop independent moral norms. By combining religious values, traditions, and critical thinking, the Legion of Mary creates an environment that allows its members to grow as morally responsible individuals, making positive contributions to society while remaining true to the principles they believe in.

They encourage attitudes of respect, cooperation, and mutual assistance. The concepts of love and forgiveness are integral parts of their worldview. In situations of conflict or difficulty, they try to resolve issues peacefully and seek constructive solutions. Thus, they create a social environment colored by values of spirituality that inspire harmony and unity. They understand that character and moral formation do not only occur through religious rituals but also through education and self-development. Therefore, they educate their children with values instilled by this movement, teaching them to become moral and responsible individuals.

In a world full of challenges and materialistic temptations, the Legion of Mary provides an alternative model of how spiritual values can be the mainstay of daily life. By integrating beliefs into every aspect of life, the Legion of Mary members create a community that reflects love, compassion, and peace. Thus, this movement is not just a place of worship but also a moral and spiritual fortress guiding its members through the journey of life.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the author examines the important role played by the Legion of Mary Community in the urban environment, with a case study in the Tidar-Malang Parish. The main findings indicate that the Legion of Mary is a spiritual oasis amidst the hustle and challenges of urban life and holds significant importance. Members of the Legion of Mary appear to have a strong motivation to join this community, with their primary goal being the enhancement of spiritual development and devotion to Saint Mary, the mother of Jesus. Through various

spiritual activities, communal prayer, and social services, this community successfully integrates moral and spiritual development values into the daily lives of its members.

The experience of serving the urban community also has a positive impact on their spiritual growth, bringing a sense of fulfillment and closeness to God. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Legion of Mary Community in the Tidar-Malang Parish not only serves as a bridge for urban dwellers to connect with spiritual values but also acts as a source of strength and inspiration in facing the daily challenges of urban life. Thus, this research strengthens our understanding of the vital role of religious communities in supporting spiritual growth and well-being in the busy urban world.

The researcher found a striking aspect of the Legion of Mary, namely the strong influence of spirituality in the daily lives of its followers. It is observed that they not only engage in worship and religious rituals but also integrate these values into every aspect of their daily lives. In their everyday lives, the Legion of Mary members live with dedication to the moral and spiritual principles taught by this movement. They gather regularly for prayer, hymn singing, and listening to sermons that teach about love, compassion, and justice. These worship activities are not just religious rituals but also moments for reflection and connecting with God the Almighty. The Legion of Mary members believe that the presence of God should be felt in every action and life experience, and worship becomes a way to strengthen their spiritual bonds.

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